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## A Pride call to action: June 14-21

# DEFEND TRANS YOUTH!

**By Martha Grevatt**

June 1 marks the start of Pride month. Ex-President Donald Trump has been out of office over 130 days. But the relentless attacks on the trans community, especially on trans youth and trans women of color, show no signs of letting up.

In 33 state legislatures, 117 bills that deny basic civil rights to trans people have been passed or introduced. This makes 2021 a record-breaking year for such bigoted legislation, according to the Human Rights Campaign. Most of these bills target trans youth, who already have a disproportionately high rate of suicide.

All but two of the 33 states have bills to bar trans athletes from participation in sports not consistent with their sex assigned at birth — especially girls and women's sports. The bills perpetuate the myth that trans women pose a danger to other women and girls — that they are really men who dress as women because they are sexual predators seeking access — or that they have some sort of unfair competitive advantage. Governors in three states have signed such bills, with innocuous-sounding names like "Fairness in Women's Sports Act," into law.

Neither science nor statistics support these backward stereotypes. "I think that these exclusionary responses are a solution in search of a problem," said Melanie Willingham-Jaggers, interim director of GLSEN, an LGBTQ+ youth advocacy organization. "There is no categorical dominance by trans athletes, but we do understand the categorical benefits for young people who play sports." (CNN, April 15) Girls and women do face many obstacles in sports — none of which have to do with the participation of trans athletes, and all of which stem from patriarchal discrimination.

Twenty states have bills to deny lifesaving therapy, including trans-affirming counseling and hormone replacement therapy, to trans adolescents. Arkansas' misnamed "Save Adolescents From Experimentation Act (SAFE)" became law after the legislature overrode Gov. Asa Hutchinson's veto.

Other bills would block trans-positive school curriculum, prohibit schoolteachers from referring to students by their gender identity and prevent state ID cards, such as driver's licenses, from reflecting a person's gender identity. These legislative assaults come on the heels of previously passed "bathroom bills" that have kept half of all trans youth from using a bathroom corresponding to their gender identity.

All this is going on in spite of Biden's March 8 executive order stating "all students should be guaranteed an educational environment free from discrimination on the basis of sex, including discrimination in the form of sexual harassment, which encompasses sexual violence, and including discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity."

These harmful bills must be stopped — but only mass struggle can stop them.

### Black and Brown trans lives matter!

Not even halfway into the year, 2021 has seen at least 26 violent murders of trans people, a large majority of them Black, Indigenous and Latinx trans women. If the trend continues, 2021 will be the most violent year for trans people

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WEEK OF ACTION JUNE 14-21
WORKERS WORLD PARTY
ORGANIZE AN EVENT IN YOUR AREA!
Called by the LGBTQ+ Caucus of Workers World Party
SHUT DOWN ANTI-TRANS LEGISLATION!
DEFEND TRANS YOUTH!
LIBERATION FOR BLACK, BROWN, ASIAN & INDIGENOUS TRANS PEOPLE!

**List your local actions at *www.tinyurl.com/DefendTransYouth***

# Cops and colonizers out of LGBTQ+ Pride!

**Statement of LGBTQ+ Caucus**
**Workers World Party**

As we head into Pride month 2021 — after more than a year of being locked down due to the COVID-19 pandemic — we are still plagued by twin epidemics of rampant racist police terror against the Black and Brown communities and U.S.-armed Israeli bombings and murder of Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza.

As the LGBTQ+ Caucus of Workers World Party, we call upon all of our siblings in this movement to demand "Cops and Colonizers Out of LGBTQ+ Pride!"

While the COVID pandemic confined us in our homes this past year, it did not stop the police terror or victimization of Black, Brown and Indigenous people in the U.S. We witnessed the Louisville, Ky., police murder of Breonna Taylor, a Black woman who was an emergency medical technician at the beginning of the pandemic. And this week, we commemorate the one-year anniversary of the assassination of George Floyd, a Black man, by Minneapolis police. Tony McDade, a transgender Black man, was killed by the Tallahassee, Fla., police shortly after Floyd was killed. The police terror against Black and Brown people

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WW PHOTO: LIZA GREEN
Leslie Feinberg

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# Victory in closure of Georgia detention center

**By Dianne Mathiowetz**
**Atlanta**

On May 20, Department of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas released a statement that Georgia immigrant rights advocates, current and former immigrant detainees were overjoyed to hear — the Irwin County Detention Center in Ocilla, Ga., would close "as soon as possible."

Operated by for-profit corporation LaSalle Corrections, which runs detention facilities elsewhere including in Louisiana and Texas, Irwin's ill treatment of detainees has produced multiple lawsuits claiming injuries and deaths. Georgia Detention Watch, a coalition of legal, community and immigrant activists, had exposed numerous violations of detainees' human rights in the facility for several years, with no apparent federal response.

Located in southern Georgia, about 200 miles from Atlanta, the 1,200-bed-capacity center held both men and women immigrants. Serious issues of medical neglect, unsanitary living conditions, inedible food, overcrowding, punitive use of solitary confinement and indifferent, if not callous and racist, treatment by Irwin personnel led to protest actions inside and outside the facility.

In September 2020, nurse Dawn Wooten bravely took action and blew the whistle on Irwin management, publicly calling them out for failure to heed COVID protocols including providing PPE, such as masks, and testing for detainees as well as staff. At a press conference in front of ICE headquarters in Atlanta, hosted by Georgia Detention Watch Sept. 15, Wooten spoke of the gynecological procedures performed on women without informed consent. These involved unnecessary or unwanted hysterectomies.

This bombshell news was followed by over 40 women filing a federal lawsuit, not only claiming medical abuse by Dr. Mahendra Amin, but retaliation by LaSalle employees at Irwin against those who told their stories. Some women were quickly deported, while others were moved to detention facilities in other states. More demonstrations took place in Atlanta and Ocilla, declaring "Believe the Women" and "Shut Irwin Down!"

GIVE ME YOUR TIRED, YOUR POOR, YOUR HUDDLED MASSES YEARNING TO BREATHE FREE.
I WILL CAGE, ENSLAVE & STERILIZE THEM
NO MORE ICE
CLOSE the CAMPS
Irwin Detention Center is making Ocilla Sick!
**Dawn Wooten, left, at a news conference in Atlanta Sept. 15, 2020.**

Federal Congressional hearings took place, and a delegation of elected representatives met with detainees. Early in 2021, women started being transferred from Irwin to Stewart Detention Center, an all-male facility, in Lumpkin, Ga., operated by CoreCivic. Stewart has its own long, egregious history of violations, including detainee deaths from COVID and other forms of medical neglect.

When President Joe Biden came to Atlanta April 29 for a rally marking 100 days in office, he was interrupted by a group of former detainees from Irwin and immigrant advocates, chanting and carrying a banner demanding "End Detention Now!" Biden was forced to repeat his campaign promise of shutting down private detention centers and asked for "five more days." Security then removed demonstrators from the rally.

Mayorkas' statement declares that "detention facilities and the treatment of individuals in those facilities will be held to our health and safety standards," indicating that those who fail those standards will see similar action.

Detainees know if that were true, they would have all been closed May 20. ❐

MUNDO OBRERO
WORKERS WORLD
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MUNDO OBRERO
WORKERS WORLD

## *Join us in the fight for socialism!*

Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational and multigendered organization that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it's the only way forward!

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ2S+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

The ruthless ruling class today seeks to wipe out decades of gains and benefits won by hard-fought struggles by people's movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multigenerational working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system.

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should remain in their hands, not be stolen in the form of capitalist profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the workers and oppressed here and worldwide. If you're interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you. ❐

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# Black Lives Matter sparks FOP defeat at polls

**By Betsey Piette**
**Philadelphia**

For decades, the endorsement of the powerful Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police was sought by almost every candidate running for office in the city and throughout Pennsylvania. Through the power of its purse strings, the FOP has been able to fill the courts with judges who favor capital punishment, high bail and long sentences, even for minor crimes. It could count on politicians to pass "get tough on crime legislation" and to look the other way when victims of police brutality demanded justice.

In his appeals in the late 1990s before the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, Mumia Abu-Jamal requested that Justice Ronald Castille recuse himself from the case. Mumia charged bias, because Castille had a role in his case as a former Philadelphia district attorney, and he received FOP backing. Castille responded that while he took FOP money, so had all the other judges on the state's highest court.

The protests held in 2020, led by Black Lives Matter and other racial justice advocates following the police killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, exposed the role of police "unions" in blocking reforms. And they created a climate in which FOP backing has become detrimental for a candidate.

In the May 18 Democratic primary election for Philadelphia district attorney, incumbent Larry Krasner overwhelmingly defeated his FOP-backed challenger, Carlos Vega, by getting 65% of the vote. This was despite Philadelphia FOP Lodge 5 spending $140,000 to oust Krasner. This amount is more than the FOP spent in the city's last seven electoral cycles.

The 14,000-member cop lodge donated over $113,000 to the Protect Our Police Political Action Committee, which was launched by a group of retired police in 2020 to push Krasner out of office. That PAC spent $134,000 on TV ads attacking Krasner. When it sent out a fundraising email blaming George Floyd for his own death, Vega renounced the group. But the damage to his election bid had already been done.

Exit interviews with voters found the primary election was seen as a choice between Krasner and the FOP. Vega's loss may be the last stand for the FOP, which had backed other losing candidates in races for eight Philadelphia Common Pleas Court judge positions.

### Pittsburgh: Police brutality a key issue

Police brutality impacted the primary in Pittsburgh, where "underdog" Ed Gainey defeated incumbent Bill Peduto in the mayoral race. Poised to become Pittsburgh's first Black mayor, Gainey is favored to win the fall election in a predominantly Democratic city. Pittsburgh is, however, ranked as one of the worst places for Black people to live in the U.S. The Abolitionist Law Center found that Black people, while only 23% of the city's population, account for 70% of arrests.

Vega, a former homicide prosecutor, was one of 31 staffers fired when Krasner took office in January 2018. Vega's campaign repeated the FOP's line that Krasner was "soft on crime" and somehow "responsible for a rise in homicides and violent crimes," which have wracked Philadelphia over the past year.

Scott Roberts, who is with the racial justice group Color of Change, stated: "People want to see these prosecutors' offices being focused on bringing down incarceration rates and holding police accountable. And they're actually looking for other solutions for violence; they're not willing to buy into the narrative that they hear from police unions and conservative politicians." (The Intercept, May 18)

### Abu-Jamal case exposes Krasner's weakness vs FOP

While applauding the FOP's electoral defeat, many progressive activists continue to criticize Krasner for refusing to stand up to police in the appellant case of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

In February 2021, Krasner filed briefs with the Pennsylvania Superior Court arguing against Abu-Jamal's current appeals. He upheld decisions made in the mid-1990s by "Hanging Judge" Albert Sabo, a virulent racist.

In an interview with The Jamal Journal May 21, Abu-Jamal's spiritual adviser, Mark Lewis Taylor, founder of Educators for Mumia Abu-Jamal, criticized Krasner for rubber-stamping every decision Sabo made at Abu-Jamal's 1982 trial and his subsequent Post Conviction Relief Appeal hearings.

Taylor told the Journal: "All of Sabo's courtrooms show at least a potential for racial bias, as well as many comments that offer clear evidence of racial bias. Krasner also knows that the bar for tolerating racial bias in courtrooms is set exceedingly low. … [yet] Krasner shows no interest in lowering the unfairly raised bar against Mumia. To perpetuate the state's performance of that exception is to fail to be a prosecutor 'for the people' of Philadelphia."

DA KRASNER!
What are you gonna do now?
FREE MUMIA
Or are you Working 4 the Clampdown?
Ill and Elderly Covidt People have the Right to Life and Care Which a Prison Infirmary CANNOT PROVIDE

**Protesters call on Krasner to "Free Mumia" in Philadelphia, March 12.** WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

While even limited judicial reforms are welcome, there is little ground for hoping that the election of "progressive" prosecutors will make any serious long-term dent in the criminal injustice system. Both Krasner's initial win and his successful bid for re-election resulted from a broad, multinational and diverse movement which has mobilized against racial injustice and police brutality. It is this movement, not Krasner, that holds the greatest potential for bringing about systemic change. ❐

# McDonald's workers go on strike to demand a livable wage!

**By Devin Cole**

*The writer worked at McDonald's from 2011-2012 and 2014.*

Workers at McDonald's in 15 cities across the country went on a coordinated strike May 19 to demand a livable wage. They struck in Los Angeles, Oakland and Sacramento, Calif.; Miami, Tampa and Orlando, Fla.; Chicago; Detroit and Flint, Mich.; Kansas City and St. Louis, Mo.; Houston; Milwaukee; Raleigh, N.C.; and Charleston, S.C., a day ahead of a McDonald's shareholders meeting.

Thousands of McDonald's workers in these 15 cities left their job sites, gathered in front of their restaurants and held signs demanding better wages and working conditions. One location had someone dressed up as Ronald McDonald on the picket line with the workers.

In California, multiple actions, including a march and caravan through Los Angeles, were led by workers carrying signs in Spanish and English demanding a $15 wage. These workers demand the passage of AB257, a California bill that will create a Fast Food Sector Council to better shape workplace standards of fast-food workers and give them more of a voice.

Striking workers led a march down the streets of St. Louis, demanding $15 an hour wages and a union. Joining the 15-city strike announced in advance, Fayetteville, N.C., workers went out and held a march, chanting for $15 wages for all workers, not just the 5% who work in corporate-owned stores. In a public relations stunt, McDonald's recently raised the pay for only that small percentage of its workers not employed by restaurant franchisees.

The strikes were largely led by Black and Brown workers, who face not only low wages, but racism on the job. The Fight for $15 struggle has been waged by McDonald's workers since 2012, when $15 was more of a livable wage in some areas. Although inflation and the rise of profits since then have made a $15 minimum wage obsolete, it would be a major step-up from the measly $8.65 in Florida, or the abysmal $7.25 in Texas and many other states.

There is no point even asking: "Can McDonald's afford a $15 minimum wage?" Chris Kempczinski, the CEO of McDonald's, made $10.8 million last year, despite his taking a measly pay cut in salary, from $1.25 million to $963,500, due to declining sales in the wake of COVID-19. (cnb.cx/2T5Ltbv)

### Over 200,000 workers exploited

McDonald's, with its cheap hiring gimmicks promoting a "bright future" and attempting to co-opt the Black Lives Matter movement with its "promise" to fund Black futures, has a long history of exploitation of the 200,000+ workers it employs worldwide. Though it claims to offer excellent career opportunities, McDonald's workers are overworked, underpaid and neglected while on the job.

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, workers at an Illinois McDonald's had to go on strike just to get masks. (abcn.ws/3bBXs6V) Shifts are long with few to no breaks; and on top of that, when you do go on break, you have to pay to eat the food that you assemble and serve.

Workers suffer injuries on the floor, and sometimes first aid is not available. They are expected to come in sick, and then there is the verbal and sometimes physical abuse hurled at workers by arrogant, angry customers. These conditions take a physical and mental toll on workers at any fast-food restaurant or restaurant of any kind. All this for $7.25 or $8.65 an hour? It is nonsense. Criminal even.

It's time to put the anti-living wage arguments to bed, once and for all.

Anti-living wage advocates bellow on and on about how if McDonald's is forced to pay a living wage, then prices will go up; profits will fall, and eventually the company will just phase out workers for robots or computers.

None of these arguments are even remotely accurate.

For one thing, ordering kiosks are already present in McDonald's in states where the minimum wage is nowhere near livable. This writer lives in Florida, where the minimum wage is $8.65, and the computers to order food from are in the lobby of the McDonald's down the street from where they live.

Workers World Party Founder and late Chairperson Sam Marcy accurately wrote 40 years ago in "High Tech, Low Pay": "In almost all of the service industries … there is a growing preponderance of new, low-paid workers," while at the same time, "the individual capitalists are driven to substitute laborsaving machinery for workers because it gives them a competitive advantage." This is more true now than when it was written, which can be said of predictions of many Marxist thinkers and revolutionaries.

As to the argument that inflation is the result of wages going up, this writer first worked at a McDonald's in Alabama where the minimum wage was then $7.25. In 2011, the price of a large Big Mac Meal in Alabama was roughly $6.50. In 2021, the price of a large Big Mac Meal in Alabama is $11.00. The minimum wage is still $7.2! So with no minimum wage increase whatsoever, the price of a Big Mac meal has jumped nearly $5.

McDonald's sales increased by almost 5% in the third quarter of 2020, during the height of the pandemic, while McDonald's earned $5 billion in profit last year. So they would not be hampered from making profits by increasing their starting wage to $15 or even $25, which is becoming more and more a reasonable wage as the cost of living increases everywhere. But capitalists want to maximize profits by keeping wages as low as possible. (on.wsj.com/3wgTNmP)

McDonald's has much to answer for in the mistreatment, neglect and exploitation of their workers. This 15-city strike, mobilized by incredible workers, adds another question the company must answer: "Can you afford to lose us?" ❐

# Texas execution exposes death penalty racism

**By Gloria Rubac**

Texas has shown the world that this racist state should not be in the business of killing. Quintin Jones, an African American man, was denied clemency by the Texas Board of Pardons and Gov. Greg Abbott and was legally lynched at 6:40 p.m., May 19.

Jones' clemency appeal was quite similar to that of a white man, Thomas Whitaker, who was granted clemency after planning to murder family members for insurance money. His father survived the shootings, forgave him and successfully fought to stop his execution.

Jones also killed a family member and had family members forgive him and support his clemency appeal. But Jones' family was not from a wealthy suburb; they weren't college-educated, and they weren't white.

Just hours after Abbott gave an emotional speech about the sanctity of life and signed a bill outlawing abortion after six weeks, he placed no value on Jones' life and allowed the execution to happen.

Michael Mowla, Jones' attorney, filed an appeal in federal court accusing the Board of Pardons of inconsistent rulings. In 2018, the board had unanimously ruled in favor of clemency for Whitaker, but last week ruled unanimously to deny clemency for Jones.

"The lack of consistency in the application of grounds for clemency — where clemency was recommended and granted for Whitaker, who is white, and rejected for Mr. Jones, who is Black — presents a legally cognizable claim that Mr. Jones' race played an impermissible role in the Board's denial of his application for clemency," the filing said.

Texas has carried out 571 executions since reinstating the death penalty in 1976. Since its first execution in 1982, Texas has held more executions in this so-called modern era than any other jurisdiction in the Western Hemisphere.

### Media witnesses excluded

The media has been present and witnessed every one of these executions except Jones'. For some inexplicable reason, the prison administration and the execution team "forgot" to let the media know that they could proceed to the execution chamber.

Texas procedures allow five media reporters into the witness room for each execution. Two of the five seats are reserved for the Associated Press and the local Huntsville Item.

Quintin Jones

"In case you're wondering why witnesses matter, know that on a regular basis TDCJ does not fully report what the condemned says. Most of the executions I witnessed, the prisoners have said, 'it burned.' TDCJ never reports that. One shook from Parkinson's tremors as he died. TDCJ denied it," said reporter Keri Blakinger with The Marshall Project.

Anti-death penalty activist Sister Helen Prejean tweeted: "Due to the lack of media witnesses, we have no idea what happened during the execution, no idea if anything went wrong and no idea if protocols were followed. If a mistake this basic can so easily occur, then what kinds of other serious mistakes are happening every time Texas chooses to kill?

"This is why we can never trust the government with the power to kill. All of this is especially disturbing in light of repeated botched executions around the United States. Media witnesses give an unbiased perspective on what happened."

In a May 20 press release, Robert Dunham, director of the Death Penalty Information Center, wrote: "Letting media witnesses in to see an execution isn't hard. If a state can't get that right, there really isn't anything else in the process — short of executing the wrong person — that it can't get wrong.

"Over and over again, state and federal officials have offered sanitized descriptions of problematic executions that are plainly inconsistent with what media witnesses have observed and reported to the public. With a policy so saturated by secrecy and official misinformation, 'Trust me, I'm the government' is no longer an acceptable option."

### 'Plate of food for the soul'

As he lay on the execution gurney, Jones thanked all those who had supported him over the years, including his Aunt Maddie, his twin brother and his friend Angie Agapetus, who visited him several times a month for over 11 years. Jones said: "I was so glad to leave this world a better, more positive place. It's not an easy life with all the negativities. Love all my friends and all the friendships that I have made. They are like the sky. It is all part of life, like a big full plate of food for the soul. I hope I left everyone a plate of food full of happy memories, happiness and no sadness."

What activists must fight for is no executions, no death rows, no racist cops and no racist courts. The whole system must be overturned and replaced with a just system that truly values all life. Being pro-life means an end to killer cops, an end to prisons as we know them and an end to injustice to our class. We deserve no less. ☐

# International solidarity in fight to free Palestinian students

**By Mirinda Crissman**

Over 320 organizations have signed onto the international Palestinian Students Solidarity Campaign to free Palestinian Students. Hundreds of university and high school students are routinely abducted, jailed or detained indefinitely on political grounds for courageously speaking out against Israel's brutal occupation and theft of land in Palestine.

They are held in horrid and torturous conditions and put through courts which have a 99% conviction rate against Palestinians, who fight for their self determination and right to live.

The organizations in support of these political-prisoner students are specifically calling for the boycott of, divestment from and sanctions against Israel, including Israeli academic institutions. They call for the end of all military and economic aid, military transactions, joint projects and direct funding to the occupying regime of Israel.

The solidarity movement is challenging programs that aim to justify or normalize Israeli occupation, which essentially criminalizes the work of student organizing. The movement is organizing direct links of solidarity with Palestinian students and their movement, so that they will not be isolated from their global community of support. (freepalestinianstudents.org)

Whether it's fighting the capitalist-imposed isolation of prisons, jails and detention centers in the U.S. or Israeli-imposed isolation of imprisonment — international solidarity is the best remedy to break down those barriers. As people are increasingly coming to criticize brutal settler-colonial regimes like Israel and their settler-colonial allies like the U.S. and Canada, they are coming to understand how our enemies use similar tactics against us.

Whether those oppressive tactics include criminalizing criticism, surveillance or isolation from other anti-racist, anti-colonial struggles — it is powerful to see growing international fightback.

Taking the lead from these courageous Palestinian students, over 300 active divestment campaigns on U.S. campuses and a growing number of community groups and unions, including the University of California Student Worker Union and International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10, have shown their solidarity. International fightback is inspired by the Palestinian student resistance, and it will not stop until they are free and have the right to determine the conditions of their own lives.

Israel detains these colonized students with aid from countries like the U.S., with its own long history of repression against anti-racist and anti-colonial movements. The International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network states: "Since the late 1960s, U.S.-based Zionist institutions have collaborated in attacks on movements for justice, because they have seen their interests as aligned with those of the U.S. state. Zionist institutions have played a prominent role in supporting the U.S. government's campaigns to undermine and discredit radical Black, Chicano and Indigenous people's movements." (tinyurl.com/7y8dfswy)

Daring to imagine and fight for a world free from destructive colonization, apartheid and occupation — we will not stop in our fight to free Palestinian students and to free all political prisoners! ☐

# Methadone: Harm or help?

**By Princess Harmony**

Methadone. The medicine stirs up controversy just by being brought up. Does methadone help or harm the addicted person? Does it count as recovery, or is it trading one addiction for another? These questions — and more — are all very important to consider.

Another thing to consider is methadone's role in society: a powerful medicine that treats the dreaded opioid addiction. Addiction is a disease that has no known cure, but methadone can effectively treat it and get patients to a place that they consider recovery.

We must look at how methadone works in the body to show how it's so effective. When regular opioids enter the bloodstream and brain, they attach to mu-opioid receptors (MORs) in the brain, producing dependence and addiction, while causing withdrawal when the use of opioids stops.

Methadone acts in this same way; it binds to the MORs and does not let go, meaning other opioids can't get the patient high. However, finding the right dosage of methadone might be difficult. If you don't receive enough, then you go into withdrawal; and if you receive too much, you go into overdose. It requires trained and skilled doctors to help patients find that perfect balance.

Therefore, the use of methadone reduces the risks of overdose on other opioids; if the patient is less likely to inject other opioids, then their risk of contracting HIV/AIDS or hepatitis C via drug injection is lowered. Over a million people suffer from opioid addiction, yet relatively few of them receive methadone, even though it is truly the gold standard in addiction treatment.

Methadone is a medication necessary in every health care system because of its impressive record in treating drug addiction. The success rate of methadone — while not entirely clear — is somewhere between 60% and 90%. An abstinence-only approach has a success rate of up to 10%.

The main problem that arises is that methadone is highly stigmatized. Instead of being viewed as a tool of recovery, it is seen as an addiction all on its own, which is

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# Palestinians, allies keep up fight against Israeli apartheid

**By Martha Grevatt**

Across the U.S., the Palestine solidarity movement has stayed in the streets — rallying, marching and chanting "Free, free Palestine." Recurring themes include the demand to cut all U.S. aid to Israel and assertions that a cease-fire is not enough, the occupation must end, and that "it is not a 'conflict,' it is genocide."

The suffering of the Palestinian people has gone on for generations — being bombed, arrested, evicted from their homes and villages and without ability to move or worship freely. They are in a constant state of siege, as Israel bombs civilians with bare seconds of warning. Israel controls the flow of food, electricity and water.

The genocide and injustice has become apparent to young people around the world, who connect racism and murder by police of African Americans with the Palestinian plight. Without the $3.8 billion from the U.S., this war could not continue.

The recent cease-fire agreement between Hamas and the Israeli Defense Forces is a welcome respite for the Palestinian people — after many days and sleepless nights being tortured by Israeli military technology. But it is by no means an end to the Palestinian struggle for justice.

In the U.S., solidarity demonstrations continued over the weekend following the cease-fire that halted the vicious Israeli bombing of Gaza.

On May 21 in **Jersey City**, hundreds protested in front of the office of Senator Bob Menendez.

Over 2,000 people, including families with children, marched through **Philadelphia**'s Center City May 22. After a rally at Rittenhouse Square, participants marched in the street to City Hall, where another rally took place. When one speaker praised Hamas as the only organization that has organized successful military resistance, much of the crowd applauded. Other speakers highlighted the growth of the movement to free Palestine and the necessity to continue organizing in every way possible, including BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions campaign).

**Buffalo** for Palestine and Al-Awda: The Palestine Right to Return Coalition organized a large demonstration in downtown Buffalo, May 22. Hundreds gathered in downtown **Cleveland** May 21 to hear fiery speeches by Palestinian, Jewish and African American community leaders.

On May 22, members of Workers World Party-Central Gulf Coast chapter and Black Voters Matter held a vigil for Palestine in downtown **Pensacola, Fla**. They related the Palestinian struggle to the struggle that Black people still face in the U.S. today. The event was interrupted by hostile conservatives, seeking to silence the voice of Black organizers with slurs and hate speech. After fending off the aggressors, attendees marched to a rally held by the University of West Florida Muslim Students Association at MLK Plaza.

The **Denver** Palestine Club has held three Saturday protests, supported by Jewish Voice for Peace, Denver Peace Council and Party for Socialism and Liberation. Between 600-1,000 people have come out each Saturday, the latest May 22. A very warm welcome has been given to Jews who came and spoke in support of Palestinian human rights.

Nearly 1,000 pro-Palestinian demonstrators rallied at the **Portland, Ore.** state building May 22 and marched through downtown to supportive cheers and honks from passersby. The crowd chanted, "Not another nickel, not another dime! U.S. money out of Palestine."

Hundreds of people gathered in downtown **San Francisco** for two demonstrations expressing support for the latest Intifada. On May 18, over 500 people gathered in the street in front of the Israeli Consulate. The action, held to support the general strike that day of Palestinian workers, shut down financial district traffic for two hours. On May 22, a broad coalition of organizations participated in a march and rally from the Mission neighborhood to Civic Center under the theme "Resistance Until Liberation."

The Arab Resource and Organizing Center, along with other members of the Palestine Action Network, has called an emergency action May 29, when an Israeli ship may be docking in the Port of **Oakland**. Demonstrators were asked to be on high alert for any changes in the boat's schedule. In 2014, a major demonstration led by Palestinian activists successfully turned away an Israeli Zim-operated ship from the Port of Oakland.

This is a small sample of the numerous pro-Palestine demonstrations that took place this past weekend, with which Workers World Party is in full solidarity. From coast to coast, people are determined to hold the U.S. government accountable — until no money is allocated to genocide and Palestine is free!

*Sara Flounders, Judy Greenspan, Sean Miller, Lyn Neeley, Joe Piette, Marcello Severo, Viviana Weinstein and Hadley Willow contributed to this article.*

**Jersey City, N.J., May 21.** WW PHOTO: SARA FLOUNDERS

**Philadelphia, May 22.** WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

**Cleveland, May 21.** WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

WW PHOTO: LYN NEELEY

**Carlos and Sierra, Workers World Party Portland, Ore. members, at demonstration for Palestine.**

**Capitol building, Denver, May 22.** PHOTO: VIVIANA WEINSTEIN

**Buffalo, N.Y., May 22.** WW PHOTO: HADLEY WILLOW

**San Francisco, May 18.** WW PHOTO: MARCELLO SEVERO

# Trans liberation and socialism

*The following are selected comments from panelists at an April 1 webinar: "Transgender Day of Visibility: a Socialist Perspective," sponsored by Workers World Party, viewable at Workers World YouTube:* tinyurl.com/35944sht. *WWP comrades Ezra Echo, Devin Cole and Romeo Channer were joined by Dr. Susan Stryker, author of "Transgender History: The Roots of Today's Revolution"; Jupiter Peraza, an undocumented trans woman, activist, DACA recipient and program associate for the Transgender District of San Francisco; and Indigo Lett, the secretary and social media coordinator of the Gulf Coast transgender activist organization STRIVE.*

**'You can't have socialism without trans liberation, and you can't have trans liberation without socialism. Capitalism and imperialism are designed and created to divide people, including by gender — to build oppression based on gender.'**

TRANS DAY OF VISIBILITY
A SOCIALIST PERSPECTIVE
WORKERS WORLD PARTY WEBINAR
WWP
THURSDAY APRIL 1ST
8 PM EDT, 7 PM CDT, 5 PM PDT
Organized by the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender + Caucus of WWP

### Trans history, trans borders

**Ezra:** Can you elaborate on the history of how the trans movement has been built in the U.S. and some of the struggles the movement has allied with?

**Susan:** The trans movement actually dates back in the U.S. to the 1890s. A group was formed in New York City at a place called Columbia Hall, which was a kind of combination bar, beer garden, performance venue, hookup site, sex worker hangout and hotel. Then there was this group called the Cercle Hermaphroditos in NYC that was mostly trans femme people, who called themselves androgynes, who said that they came together to unite for common defense against the bitter persecutions of the world.

Trans activism really starts to take off as a minority identity activist movement in the 1950s and 1960s. A journal called the Society for Equality in Dress was publishing back in the 1950s. You start to see people advocating for the ability to change names on legal documents in the early 1960s. When the social movements of the 1960s get started, you see trans people organizing in street politics and being engaged in radical direct action against policing and incarceration.

I made a film "Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton's Cafeteria," about trans women in the Tenderloin [neighborhood] in San Francisco, who would hang out at the all-night cafeteria, kind of the chill-out zone for the whole neighborhood. The cops would regularly raid the place, and one night in August 1966 — three years before the more famous Stonewall Uprising — the cops came in, and the queens fought back. As the best contemporaneous description of the event says, general havoc was raised that night in the Tenderloin.

I feel particularly in the 21st century, post 9/11, a lot of what trans people have faced in terms of violence is state-based violence that has to do with borders — border crossing and identity documentation and access to social services. Trans people — we often get lumped under the LGBT umbrella, but in some ways, I think trans issues have less to do with sexual orientation issues than with questions about citizenship status, who gets to be counted as a member of the body politic.

And so trans activism is very much aligned with pro-migrant, pro-asylum, pro-open borders kind of activism.

**Jupiter:** About how the history of the trans movement has been built in the U.S. — the trans movement has sort of made leaps as it's attached itself to movements and faces in history. For example, the Industrial Revolution brought people to urban centers, in this geographical location where they weren't known by anyone else. Because when you live in a small town, in a small village, everybody knows you; there's this pressure of having to be very conservative and limited in the way that you express yourself. In the Industrial Revolution people were flocking to cities and experimenting with their expression.

Another example: After World War II ended, we saw the rise in international attention to Christine Jorgensen [a former U.S. GI who achieved sex affirmation surgery in Denmark in 1951]. She's both seen as fun, and her participation in the war brings a new light and a new attention to the trans movement. And if you fast-forward some decades to the AIDS epidemic, you also see trans people being impacted and trans issues being brought forth in a new light.

But historically, cisgender heteronormative issues are highlighted more than trans people. That is something that I believe trans people have always struggled with. Everything that happens, we really need to bring attention how this impacts transgender people. For example, within the Black Lives Matter movement, with the murder of Black trans women, we are now experiencing the cry that "Black Trans Lives Matter!" This is a perfect example of how we can highlight trans struggles in whatever is currently happening right now — with police brutality, for example.

I will say I think we're doing an incredible job in understanding trans issues and strengths and in bringing attention to trans struggles to make this a better society for trans people.

### Trans struggle for socialism

**Ezra:** Why is it critical to fight for socialism in order to secure trans liberation?

**Romeo:** Perhaps a very obvious point is that health care is a human right — and access to health care is especially necessary and urgent for trans folks. It's one of the biggest battles being fought for by trans folks across the world. If you live in a socialist country, that provides health care for all its people.

**Devin:** You can't have socialism without trans liberation, and you can't have trans liberation without socialism. Capitalism and imperialism are designed and created to divide people, including by gender—to build oppression based on gender.

Even though there are people who believe that transgender is not that big of a deal in the fight for socialism, it's critical! We had Comrade Leslie Feinberg, a member of Workers World Party for well over 40 years, who intricately and meticulously laid the connection out that gender oppression arose as part of class oppression, in hir Marxist historical analysis "Transgender Warriors." The fight for socialism is the fight for trans liberation, and vice versa.

**Susan:** To actually achieve a just and livable and sustainable society that treats everybody fairly — where everybody has enough, nobody's got too much — we have to think about the U.S. in particular, the settler-colonial dimension, the fact the U.S. is built on stolen labor and stolen land. For me, socialism is just the belief, the conviction, that you can, in fact, have a just social order. And if a system of governance doesn't address that, it's still settler colonialism.

**Indigo:** For me, socialism is understanding how bad capitalism is. For working-class people, we need to understand the economic point, obviously, and the point about racism, but we also have to understand the international

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**Black Trans Lives Matter!**

# CeCe McDonald: the right to self-defense

*This is the first part of an article published Dec. 7, 2012, in Workers World in the series of articles by Leslie Feinberg on the local, U.S. and international campaign to "Free CeCe!" Trans woman McDonald was charged with murder for defending herself and friends when attacked by a white-supremacist mob in 2011 in Minneapolis. In June 2012, Feinberg committed civil disobedience and was arrested for spray-painting "Free CeCe!" on the walls and pillars of the Hennepin County Courthouse, where McDonald was to be sentenced. Sent to prison, CeCe McDonald served much less time because of the powerful campaign for her freedom. She was finally freed Jan. 13, 2014.*

WW PHOTO: LESLIE FEINBERG

**CeCe McDonald and Leslie Feinberg, Hennepin County jail, Minneapolis, May 1, 2012.**

At certain moments in history, the struggle of individuals to survive and organize against fascist attacks, police and prison terror sharply reveals the societal relationship of forces — between oppressor and oppressed, exploiter and exploited. These battles inspire unity and action that help shape and define political eras — like the demands to free the Scottsboro Brothers, Lolita Lebron, Leonard Peltier, George Jackson, Joann Little, and Mumia Abu-Jamal.

The struggle to "Free CeCe!" is sparking a growing, broad united front against white supremacy and anti-trans violence. CeCe McDonald's courage and consciousness, and the tireless and tenacious solidarity work by supporters in Minneapolis and the region — led by those who are oppressed — has widened and deepened the demand to "Free CeCe!" in cities across the U.S. and around the world.

Hundreds of thousands of people in the U.S. and internationally now know more facts about the attack on CeCe McDonald than the judge and prosecutor allowed a jury to know during her trial.

CeCe McDonald and her friends were assaulted in Minneapolis on June 5, 2011, by a group that announced its ideology as racist and fascist in words and action. The attackers shouted white-supremacist Klan language, transmisogynist epithets and a slur against same-sex love.

CeCe replied that "her crew would not tolerate hate speech."

One of the attackers then assaulted CeCe McDonald with a weapon — smashing her in the face with a bar glass that deeply punctured her cheek.

In the fight that ensued, one of the attackers died. He had a swastika tattoo.

CeCe McDonald was the only person arrested by the police that night. McDonald has been punished ever since as the "aggressor" for defending her life and the lives of her friends — and surviving. Police, sheriffs, jailers, prosecutor, judge and prison administration have arrested her, locked her up and held her in solitary confinement for long periods.

Stop the war on trans women of color! ❑

**Leslie Feinberg's series on socialism and LGBTQ+ history, "Lavender & Red," appeared in the Workers World/Mundo Obrero newspaper in 2004-2008 and can be read at *workers.org/books*.**

WW COMMENTARY

# Intoxication culture and the working class

**By Devin Cole and Princess Harmony**

*The bourgeoisie depend on people drowning their problems in substances in order to avoid reaching the conclusion that their problems are the result of the bourgeoisie.*

Intoxication culture is made up of the social cues and forces which push workers and oppressed people into using drugs or alcohol. Our entire society — U.S. society — has been drowned in this intoxication. Whether cis or trans, straight or queer, everyone is impacted by the overwhelming forces that push us into using and abusing drugs and alcohol.

The bourgeoisie depend on people drowning their problems in substances in order to avoid reaching the conclusion that their problems are the result of the bourgeoisie.

This is especially true in the queer community, where queer people are 2 to 4 times more likely to use and abuse substances than their heterosexual and cisgender counterparts. This happens because of anti-queer and anti-trans oppressions. (tinyurl.com/3h6rpryt)

The incidence of drug and alcohol abuse rises in people who have experienced anti-queer and anti-trans harassment or violent incidents. For example, people who have experienced anti-trans verbal abuse in schools were about 35% more likely to abuse substances, and those who experienced physical abuse were about 40% more likely.

Oppression of queer and trans people is a direct factor behind drug abuse in queer communities. But corporations continue to feed on our abuse of legal substances like alcohol products. Almost all major Pride events in the U.S. are sponsored by alcohol companies. Despite the fact that June's Pride-themed events should be welcoming to everyone — the sober and the underaged included — substance-abuse corporations continue to use Pride as a marketing gimmick.

Targeted corporate advertising campaigns knowingly prey on and are extremely destructive in our community. Yet few queer mainstream organizations and events call this advertisement out, thinking that corporate dollars guarantee survival.

### Rainbow capitalism fuels intoxication culture

It is no surprise that corporations have begun to rebrand themselves as "diverse and inclusive" and to emphasize that their products "are for everyone." This is done to stay competitive in attracting the most buyers for their products in the capitalist dog-eat-dog race of profit-making for the corporations and the bosses.

Companies have developed a barrage of alcohol advertisements geared towards the LGBTQ+ population. There are rainbow liquor bottles, rainbow shot glasses, beer commercials featuring queer couples — the works.

This campaign shifts into overdrive during Pride month. In large cities, you won't be able to attend a major Pride event without seeing advertisements for Bud Light, Absolut or another alcohol company. In Boston and Chicago, Bud Light is one the top sponsors of Pride.

In smaller cities, it has become more common to attend Pride festivals and come face-to-face with liquor trucks, beer tents and other advertisements of alcohol. In some places, there are many all-night Pride parties with seemingly endless amounts of alcohol as well as illicit drugs. Many of these events end up with people suffering from alcohol poisoning or other dangerous side effects of excessive drinking.

There is no denying that the advertising onslaught puts temptation right in the face of many working-class LGBTQ+ people suffering from "minority stress" — the day-to-day struggle of being discriminated against and outright oppressed.

There is a direct correlation between the stress of LGBTQ+ oppression because of outright discrimination and dehumanization — as well as the lack of resources for LGBTQ+ people — and the move to self-medication through drinking and drug use.

Alcohol companies understand this and profit off the oppression of LGBTQ+ people, perpetuating intoxication culture, creating more substance-abuse issues in the LGBTQ+ population and pocketing more money. Unrelenting corporate pursuit of profits directly contributes to the continued suffering of an oppressed group.

### Hard drug usage soaring in the LGBTQ+ population

Not only is alcohol and alcoholism a growing problem for queer/trans people, hard drugs such as crystal meth have become an abuse epidemic. Statistically, gay men are four times as likely to try crystal meth than heterosexual men. Addiction rates in general are alarmingly high in the LGBTQ+ community, due to the heavy weight of day-to-day oppression that is suffocating all of us. Many queer/trans people spiral into drug-induced escapism, which temporarily frees people from the fear and anxiety about being judged or mistreated by a violent, heteronormative society.

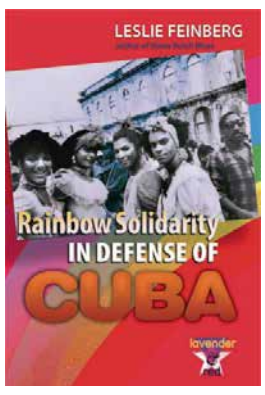
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have documented that use of drugs and alcohol statistically lead to higher rates for HIV/AIDS and other STDs, fueling the ongoing epidemic of HIV/AIDS in the LGBTQ+ community. Though the epidemic is not as rampant as it was 35 years ago, the deadly disease still ravages oppressed communities and people, particularly working-class Black trans women.

### Sobriety and socialism

The connection between intoxication culture and death is a vicious cycle that capitalism perpetuates through direct attack and co-optation. Unfortunately, that co-opting is present in Pride.

In the face of this ongoing conflict, some Pride festivals have turned to sober Pride. This can include not allowing or selling any alcohol on the premises, along with harm-reduction staff on site, who have Narcan to treat drug overdoses and provide resources on sobriety and safe drug use.

These Pride events and other similar LGBTQ+ events are being led by a new wave of queer/trans socialists committed to building a socialist revolution that is queer-led, trans-led and based around community care and solidarity.




**Available for free download at workers.org/books.**

These LGBTQ+ socialists have realized that capitalism will not bring liberation or a solution to any problem, but will only fuel more chaos, more intoxication culture and leave more oppressed people and workers dead in its wake.

They know that it will be socialism that deals the death blow to intoxication culture. ❐

# A salute to Madeline Davis

**By Ezra Echo**

Madeline Davis, a mentor, role model and trailblazer in the LGBTQ+ community of Buffalo, N.Y., died April 28 at the age of 80. Born in Buffalo, Davis was an activist there for most of her life.

**Madeline Davis**

With Elizabeth Kennedy, Davis co-authored "Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: the History of a Lesbian Community." Based on 13 years of research, including 45 oral histories, the book was and still is the definitive study of the lives of working-class lesbians in Buffalo from the 1930s through the 1960s. It documented butch-femme culture in the bars and in relationships and the struggles lesbians faced just to exist safely as who they were. The book won awards from the American Sociological Association, the American Anthropological Association and the Lambda Literary Foundation.

In 1970 Davis was one of the founders of the Buffalo chapter of the Mattachine Society, an early gay-rights organization. She and other members created "Fifth Freedom," the earliest magazine for the LGBTQ+ community in western New York. In 1972 she developed "Lesbianism 101," the first class focusing on lesbian identity offered at a major U.S. university.

In 2001, after retiring from her job as chief conservator in the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library System, Davis founded the Buffalo Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Archives. One of the largest LGBTQ+ archives in the U.S., the 200-plus file boxes of materials include T-shirts, buttons, early literature, publications and documents of over 80 individuals, groups and organizations. Housed in the special collections of SUNY Buffalo State and renamed the Dr. Madeline Davis LGBTQ Archive of Western New York, the collection powerfully documents how a movement for equality can be built in a working-class city.

A performer who originally worked her way through college singing folk and jazz in coffeehouses, Davis later sang at political fundraisers for the All Peoples' Congress — a mass organization of Workers World Party — and in many Pride celebrations. For the first gay rights march on New York's state capitol in Albany in 1971, Davis composed "Stonewall Nation," which became a kind of unofficial movement anthem.

Davis is survived by Wendy Smiley, her primary partner of 25 years and primary caregiver.

The LGBTQ+ Caucus of Workers World Party salutes Madeline Davis for her activism in the struggle and for her long, dedicated history of work for our community. ❐

# Trans liberation and socialism

*Continued from page 6*

point — understand the U.S. role as a country and how that affects other people in other countries. Historically there are third-gender communities everywhere, and they are affected by colonialism and capitalism!

Then especially last year with the pandemic, that really showed we need so much — health care, education and so many other things. That leads us obviously toward socialism. With the administration we have now, they're basically going to try to get us back to where the U.S. was before the pandemic — which was still a very terrible place! So I think for us, it's just a constant, constant unlearning of our own toxic behaviors, to continue learning more about ourselves and pushing toward socialism in a way that we can all feel welcomed and comfortable and alive.

**Romeo:** I just want to add that I personally won't feel liberated if the hormones that I take are being manufactured on stolen Palestinian land, which is where a lot of hormone replacement therapy comes from. That's just one of many, many examples of how all these struggles across the globe are materially linked. Not only in the way we need to look at structures and deal with structures, but there is the actual material physical connection that globalization and capitalism have tied together. Our gender is still being controlled and policed to a great extent by these systems of capitalism and imperialism. ❐

**The 'riot' at Compton's Cafeteria, San Francisco, 1966.**

# On the picket line

WHEN WE FIGHT WE WIN!

**By Marie Kelly**

## Labor solidarity with Palestine

On May 18, a general strike of Palestinian workers was held to protest the killing of civilians in Gaza, the displacement of Palestinians from their homes in Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood and the attacks on Al-Aqsa Mosque by Israeli Defense Forces. The strike helped to pressure the oppressive apartheid state of Israel to call off their genocidal bombing attacks.

The labor movement in the U.S. must ally with Palestinian workers and adopt BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions campaign) resolutions to end Israel's apartheid stranglehold on Palestine. Currently the AFL-CIO still sides with the Jewish Labor Committee, which opposes the BDS movement and supports Israel's war crimes against the Palestinians. The AFL-CIO and many national labor organizations hold Israeli bonds invested from union members' pension funds, but are not transparent about the amounts invested, estimated to be in the billions. Leaders of both the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union and the American Federation of Teachers belong to the JLC.

Historically, it has been rank-and-file members who have shown support for a free Palestine. In 1973, 2,000 autoworkers with UAW's Arab Workers Caucus held a wildcat strike in Detroit and other protests to demand United Auto Workers divest from Israel. Multiple UAW locals did liquidate their Israeli bonds and assets by 1975.

In 2010, a Connecticut AFL-CIO campaign was successful in divesting $25,000 worth of Israeli bonds.

University of California graduate student workers of UAW Local 2865 passed a resolution in 2015 calling on the union and the university to divest from Israeli banks and major companies which profit from business with Israel — such as Hewlett-Packard and Caterpillar. In 2016, similar resolutions were passed by UAW Local 2322 graduate student workers at the University of Massachusetts and UAW Local 2110 grad student workers at New York University. But the UAW International Executive Board under the leadership of now-disgraced former President Dennis Williams declared these resolutions a violation of the union's constitution.

Members of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 refused to cross the picket line when activists protested the docking of an Israeli ship in Oakland harbor in 2014. The ILWU has a decades-long history of solidarity actions, and their contracts contain language prohibiting members from crossing picket lines.

The International Dockworkers Council issued a strong statement supporting the Palestinian workers' May 18 general strike and condemning the massacre of Palestinian civilians and children. Both the ILWU on the West Coast and the separate International Longshoremen's Association on the East Coast are affiliates of the IDC.

Unfortunately only one national U.S. union, so far, has taken action to support the BDS movement. The United Electrical Workers adopted a resolution endorsing BDS at their national convention in 2015. UE General President Bruce Klipple said, "The widespread abuse of workers under the occupation (of Palestine by Israel) is a concern for the global labor movement." (ueunion.org)

Many union leaders and activists have penned their names to a recent Labor for Palestine statement. (laborforpalestine.net)

## Labor unions align with LGBTQ+ rights

As we commemorate Pride Month and the victories won against anti-LGBTQ2S+ oppression, let's take a moment to recall the protections that belonging to a union provide. Labor activists defend the working class against the bourgeois owners of industry. Oppressed groups are guaranteed rights as union members in the workplace, even if this does not extend to society in general. Many union contracts contain language banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity/gender expression.

LGBTQ+ workers who fought against workplace injustice played a prominent role in the history of the labor movement in this country. Helen Marot was a lesbian labor activist who organized working women into trade unions and fought for reforms to limit child labor in the 19th and 20th centuries. She was one of the leaders of the first shirtwaist workers' strike in 1909.

In the 1930s heyday of labor militancy, the Marine Cooks and Stewards Union elected Stephen Blair, an openly gay man, as vice president. His partner, Frank McCormick, worked with communist, gay-rights activist Harry Hay to help organizers of the 83-day San Francisco dockworkers' strike in 1934.

In the 1970s, the American Federation of Teachers spoke out in opposition to discrimination against LGBTQ+ workers, and the AFL-CIO joined the boycott of Coors beer over Coors' union busting and anti-LGBTQ+ and racist hiring practices.

Workers World Party leader Leslie Feinberg, a revolutionary communist transgender lesbian, said "Like racism and all forms of prejudice, bigotry against transgendered people is a deadly carcinogen. We are pitted against each other in order to keep us from seeing each other as allies. Genuine bonds of solidarity can be forged between people who respect each other's differences and are willing to fight their enemy together. We are the class that does the work of the world and can revolutionize it. We can win true liberation."

Feinberg was a member of the National Writers Union and of Pride at Work. Founded in 1994 on the 25th anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion, PAW is an AFL-CIO constituency group representing LGBTQ+ union members. The group organizes mutual support between organized labor and the LGBTQ+ community to further social and economic justice.

Leslie Feinberg ¡presente! ☐

# Cops and colonizers out of LGBTQ+ Pride!

*Continued from page 1*

continues at an alarming rate as we enter this year's Pride month.

The U.S. government, not content with its war at home against Black, Brown and Indigenous people, exports police terror abroad. We are sickened by the continued occupation of Palestine by Israel, which is armed and supported by the U.S. In fact, while Israel was bombing the West Bank and Gaza, during the end of Ramadan and the beginning of Eid, two Muslim holy days, the U.S. Congress was approving over $700 million in arms to Israel, widely recognized as a settler-colonial state. Over 243 Palestinians, including 66 children, were killed by Israeli terrorism during its recent attacks.

This year's Pride marks the 52nd anniversary of the great Stonewall Rebellion — which was a militant uprising, led by working-class transgender youth and drag queens of color, against police brutality and oppression. The most marginalized and oppressed of the LGBTQ+ community rebelled against a police raid on the Stonewall Inn in New York City, June 28, 1969. The transgender community in the Tenderloin neighborhood of San Francisco had previously rebelled against police oppression and raids in August 1966, in the Compton's Cafeteria Riot. The LGBTQ+ movement was born out of these actions against police terror.

In 2015 the Williams Institute reported that 48% of LGBTQ+ victims of violence experienced police violence. In 2015, the same institute reported that 58% of trans people said they were victims of verbal harassment, persistent misgendering, physical and sexual assault, and forced to perform sexual acts to avoid being arrested. Of course the groups most affected by police violence within the community are Black and Brown LGBTQ+ people. Unarmed Black people are 3.5 times more likely to be killed by the police compared to their white counterparts.

**World Social Forum, Vancouver, B.C. 2017.**

It is critical that we live up to our heritage of resistance and stop police violence against our community. It is high time that all cops be kicked out of Pride, whether events are virtual or in person. No police of any kind — including police officers, members of the FBI or other federal police agencies, Immigration and Customs Enforcement or prison guards — should be allowed to participate in Pride activities. We applaud the actions of New York City's Heritage of Pride organizers who banned uniformed police and security from all events this year and through 2025. We challenge all Pride organizers to ban any participation of these purveyors of racist violence.

We urge all Pride organizers to terminate any connection with colonizers, including the Israeli Consulate, and to take a strong stand against U.S. support for the continued occupation of Palestine. LGBTQ+ Pride should fully embrace the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement against Israel.

This Pride, let us demand an end to racist police terror, not only in the U.S. but across the globe. Stonewall must once again commemorate and inspire continued rebellion against U.S. racism and U.S.-backed oppression everywhere. ☐

# Defend trans youth!

*Continued from page 1*

since HRC began tracking their deaths in 2013. Last year had been the most violent year, with 44 killings; there had been 200 since 2013.

Contributing factors to the high level of vicious attacks on trans women of color include poverty and homelessness, abusive intimate relationships, lack of physical and mental health care, nonacceptance from biological families and dependency on sex work for survival. All these conditions are rooted in anti-trans stigma and discrimination and its intersectionality with racism and sexism.

Discrimination in many areas of life is well documented. A majority of trans people report bigoted comments from family members. More than 1 in 10 have been advised by mental health professionals to stop being transgender. Misgendering and dead-naming in the media is commonplace, including in fatality reporting.

WW PHOTO: MINNIE BRUCE PRATT

**June 2020, Syracuse, N.Y.**

Trans unemployment is three times the national average — and even higher when compounded with racist and sexist discrimination.

The police will not protect the trans community from bigoted violence. In fact they are among the killers of trans people, including Tony McDade, a Black trans man fatally shot May 27, 2020, by Tallahassee, Fla., police.

A militant mass working-class response to defend the trans community is urgently needed. The LGBTQ2S+, progressive and labor movements must demonstrate unity and solidarity against bigotry.

The LGBTQ+ Caucus of Workers World Party has initiated a call for a week of action June 14-21. We say: Defend trans youth! Stop anti-trans attacks! Black, Brown and Indigenous trans lives matter! Organize an action where you live. ☐

## Despite loss of life and destruction

# Gaza resists, hits Israel hard

**By Monica Moorehead**

**Ramallah, in the West Bank, May 18.**

A cease-fire between Israel and Hamas began May 21. It followed 11 days of the U.S.-armed and backed Israeli Air Force's vicious airstrikes on occupied Gaza. The bombs and rockets massacred more than 250 Palestinians, including over 60 children. Some 2,000 people were injured out of a population of 2 million in Gaza.

According to the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions, the Israeli raids destroyed over 700 residential buildings, including 76 high rises and over 20 media outlets in three buildings, including the famous building that housed the offices of Al-Jazeera and the Associated Press.

Until the cease-fire began, the Hamas liberation group, the political representative of Gazans, fired rockets made out of both detonated and undetonated Israeli missiles into Israel, including Tel Aviv, and reportedly killed 12 people.

Israeli airstrikes targeted the already understaffed and underfunded Gaza health facilities, including the only clinic serving exclusively those infected with coronavirus. As the bombing forced so many Gaza residents into underground bunkers, community centers and small enclosed spaces, the virus has undoubtedly spread. Only 2% or 40,000 Gazans had been vaccinated before May 11.

Israeli border patrol prohibited food and humanitarian aid from coming into Gaza during the bombing. This included medical supplies like masks and vaccines.

According to the International Red Cross, the bombings cut water supplies in Gaza by 40%, and an estimated 700,000 Gazans are still affected by power cuts. Gazans are suffering, not only from the air strikes, but from ongoing disease, lack of water and power, and hunger.

What happened to Gaza was another racist, genocidal act on the part of the racist, settler-colonial regime of Israel. Still, according to many sources including Palestinians, others in the Arab world and bourgeois sources, this latest assault, with all its mass destruction and loss of life, turned into a political victory for Gaza and a political and moral defeat for Israel.

That all the weapons at the disposal of the most powerful garrison state in the "Middle East" — geographically part of West Asia — failed to defeat the Hamas-led people's resistance sets back Western imperialism. This is indeed a stunning development.

### General strike was 'significant'

On May 18, Palestinians held a historic, unprecedented general strike not only in the Occupied Territories of Gaza and the West Bank, but throughout the pre-1967 boundaries of Israel. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinian workers, students, business people and supporters refused to work, go to school or open their businesses. They protested the Israeli government and military's heinous assaults on Gaza.

Also, over a dozen Palestinian demonstrators in the West Bank and Ramallah were shot to death by the Israelis during the 11-day siege.

Mustafa Barghouti, an independent politician, characterized the strike as a "a very significant day," saying that "It reflects how Palestinians now have a unified struggle against the same system of apartheid." (New York Times, May 18)

It is no coincidence that this powerful show of shutting down major sections of the Israeli economy by these low-waged, oppressed workers played an important role in speeding up this latest cease-fire. There were more Palestinian calls for a one-state solution, as opposed to a two-state solution that allows the Israeli repressive state to remain intact.

### Black Lives Matter and U.S. shift in opinion

During the 11 days, Biden publicly called for a cease-fire, while at the same time saying "Israel had the right to defend itself," just as every U.S. president has before him. Meanwhile the U.S. population, especially the younger generation, showed they sided more and more with the Palestinians and considered them an oppressed, occupied people — which they are and have been for more than 73 years. When Biden visited an auto plant in Dearborn, Mich., home of many people of Arab descent, the workers there protested his support for Israel.

Prominent entertainers like Rihanna, Rage Against the Machine and actors Seth Rogen, Mark Ruffalo, Susan Sarandon and Viola Davis condemned Israeli aggression on social media.

This shift of views was also reflected within Congress. Progressive Democrats like Rep. Cori Bush from Missouri and Rep. Rashida Tlaib, a Palestinian American from Michigan who represents the largest Arab population in the U.S., have openly criticized Israel's assault on Gaza.

Cori Bush was a prominent organizer of the Black Lives Matter struggle in Ferguson, Mo., following the brutal murder of 18-year-old Michael Brown by a white police officer in August 2014. This killing sparked a month-long uprising, not only in Ferguson but throughout the United States. During that time Palestinians in the Occupied Territories demonstrated solidarity with the Black community of Ferguson.

In a statement to the May 22 Washington Post, Rep. Bush said, "As we march in defense of Black lives, we are not just saying that Black people in this country should be able to live full and joyous lives. We're saying that our own government is funding a brutal and militarized disposition toward our very existence — from Ferguson to Palestine."

Melina Abdullah, co-founder of the Los Angeles chapter of Black Lives Matter, said in the same article, "We understand that the liberation of Black people in the United States is tied to the liberation of Black people all over the world and tied to the liberation of oppressed people all over the world. Being in solidarity with the Palestinian people is something that's been part of our work as Black Lives Matter for almost as long as we've been an organization."

The Black Lives Matter struggle, which has called for defunding and even for abolishing the police, has become even more international in scope following the police lynching of George Floyd in May 2020. This development has helped raise consciousness and solidarity with other oppressed peoples like the Palestinians.

Whether they are brutalized and occupied by the National Fraternal Order of Police or the Israeli armed forces, the oppressor is the same imperialist system. ❑

# Delegation observing Syrian elections reaches Damascus

**By Ted Kelly**
**Damascus, Syria**

WW PHOTO

**Delegation with Imad Abdullah Sarah, Syrian Minister of Information, fifth from right.**

May 23 — As the global conflict centered in their country enters the 11th year, Syrians are preparing for May 26 national elections. Thousands of citizens displaced by war and U.S.-imposed sanctions have already cast their ballots in Lebanon, Iran, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and elsewhere round the world.

President Bashar al-Assad, reelected in the last round of presidential elections in 2014, stands for reelection as the head of a coalition government, led by Al-Assad's Ba'ath Party, which includes the Syrian Communist Party.

All opposition groups which have agreed to not engage in armed struggle to overthrow the government may participate in the elections, and the government has even welcomed Syrians who had previously taken up arms, to "exercise their electoral right" to "determine the future of Syria."

An international delegation organized by Arab Americans 4 Syria and the Syrian Solidarity Movement arrived in Damascus late Sunday night, May 23, to assist in monitoring elections. The delegation includes representatives from the International Action Center and Anti-War Committee. Workers World will be publishing on-the-ground updates throughout the election week.

Minister Imad Abdullah Sarah told the delegation, "We do not tell the media what to say. But we just ask that they try to be objective." He lamented that U.S. media outlets have used the access they've been granted to distort the truth to favor U.S. State Department narratives.

Minister Sarah joked, "When the New York Times comes to Syria, I want to ask them, 'Okay, how many of you are working for the CIA?'" He said that in one case, a reporter staying in Damascus reported as if he were on the ground in Aleppo. That city is hundreds of miles to the north near the Turkish border, which the U.S. audience would be unlikely to know.

"We are a small office, a small staff," he said, without the resources to counter the massive propaganda campaign launched by billionaire-owned U.S. corporate media.

Describing the sanctions that have strangled Syrian industrial and financial institutions, the minister said people must understand how much damage has been done over the last decade. Syrian pharmaceuticals, once a major sector of industry, have ground to a halt, because critical components can no longer be imported.

Aviation equipment, for another example, must be retrofitted and recycled since they can't be imported. But the most devastating effect of international sanctions, he said, falls not on President Assad, not on the government, but on the people. Over a million people in al-Hasakah province are going thirsty as sanctions restrict even water access.

He expressed the Syrian people's affection for the people of the United States. He cited the state murder of Black people, mentioning George Floyd by name, as a way of expressing understanding that the U.S. government does not represent the interests of the people living there.

*The author represents the IAC on the delegation of election observers.*

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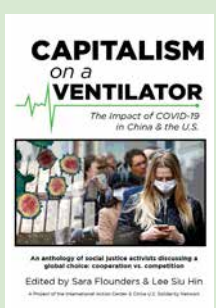

WORKERS WORLD

*editorial*

# ‘What's Going On?’ 50 years later

One year ago, May 26, 2020, the video of George Floyd’s murder by Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin sparked months of intense global struggles which have kept the movement against police brutality and for racial justice on the front burner. Despite Chauvin’s conviction, since his trial began March 29, police murders of Black and Latinx people continue at over three per day.

One hundred years ago, between May 31 and June 1, 1921, mobs of white residents attacked, set afire and destroyed the Tulsa, Okla., Greenwood District, at the time one of the wealthiest U.S. Black communities. The 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre, which was covered up for decades and omitted from history books, is now recognized as one of the worst acts of racial violence in U.S. history.

Over 300 Black people were killed. And with the destruction of the Greenwood District, 10,000 were left homeless. The only living survivors of the massacre — Viola Fletcher, 107; Hughes Van Ellis, 100; and Lessie Benningfield Randle, 106 — testified last week in favor of a congressional bill allowing them to seek reparations.

At the hearing Fletcher said: “I will never forget the violence of the white mob when we left our home. I still see Black men being shot; Black bodies lying in the street. I still smell smoke and see fire. I still see Black businesses being burned. I still hear airplanes flying overhead. I hear the screams.”

Between these two milestones in Black history came the release 50 years ago, May 21, 1971, of Motown legend Marvin Gaye’s “What’s Going On,” named “greatest album of all time” by Rolling Stone magazine last year. The album was released during a historic period rocked by community rebellions in major U.S. cities, frequent protests over the U.S. war in Vietnam, demonstrations in support of the Black Panther Party and demands for social justice for women and LGBTQ+ people.

Including the title song, all nine album tracks connect without pauses and take on issues of racism, police brutality, war, the environment, drug addiction and social and economic justice in ways that still resonate, because they raise questions that remain unanswered. Fifty years after its debut, the album has found a new generation of appreciative admirers, many of them activists.

### Gaye’s lyrics speak volumes

In the title track, Gaye’s refrains include: “Brother, brother — there’s too many of you dying,” and “We don’t need to escalate; you see war is not the answer.” Also “Picket lines and picket signs, don’t punish me with brutality.”

“What’s happening brother” starts with the lyrics: “Hey baby, what’cha know good. I’m just gettin’ back, but you knew I would. War is hell, when will it end?” The song opens with the background noise of a homecoming for a Vietnam veteran [Gaye’s brother Frankie who had just returned from the war]. Other lyrics say: “Can’t find no work, can’t find no job, my friend. Money is tighter than it’s ever been … I just don’t understand what’s going on across this land.”

“Mercy Mercy Me (the Ecology)” laments environmental damage: “Where did all the blue skies go? Poison is the wind that blows.” And later: “Radiation underground and in the sky. Animals and birds who live nearby are dying.” “Flyin’ High (In the Friendly Sky)” takes on drug addiction, already becoming an issue in oppressed communities.

In a track that could have been penned today, “Inner City Blues (make me wanna holler),” speaks of bleak economic times and social unrest in the 1970s. Gaye addresses economic injustices in refrains: “Rockets, moon shots, spend it on the have nots. Money, we make it, before we see it you take it.” And later: “Inflation, no chance to increase finance. Bills pile up sky high. Send that boy off to die” interspersed with the lament “This ain’t livin’; this ain’t livin’.”

Toward the end of the track, Gaye sings, “Oh crime is increasing, trigger-happy policing, panic is spreading, God knows where we’re heading. Oh, make me want to holler.”

Take some time, sit back, but listen to the entire album — only 35 minutes long. (tinyurl.com/y3stpttb)

Then, in Marvin Gaye’s memory, dedicate yourself to fighting for a socialist system, so that it won’t take another 50 years before his critical questions find answers. ☐

# Methadone: Harm or help?

*Continued from page 4*

wrong. But we must look at stigmatization against methadone to see how it is actually a very important medication.

### NIMBYs, abstinence and drug makers

“Not in my back yard” movements in cities like Philadelphia have been actively trying to stigmatize and eliminate the use of methadone, while ignoring how many people are helped and how effective the medication is. They view methadone as a public nuisance and are often fueled by racism.

Another source of methadone stigma comes from the recovery world itself. The fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous published Bulletin 29, “Regarding Methadone and Other Drug Replacement Programs,” a screed against methadone and the people on methadone. It states: “Our program approaches recovery from addiction through abstinence, cautioning against the substitution of one drug for another. That’s our program; it’s what we offer the addict who still suffers.”

A similar “Just Say No” campaign prevalent in the 1980s and early 1990s as part of the “War on Drugs” did little to stem drug use, yet it gave politicians ammunition to pass more “get tough on crime” legislation that caused mass incarceration to skyrocket.

With much of the recovery community against methadone, one drug maker helped push the stigma along. Alkermes — maker of Vivitrol (naltrexone injection) — pushes its lobbyists to paint methadone and buprenorphine as dangerous and irrationally abusable, which is not the case. Even when methadone is diverted, it still saves people from the pain of opioid withdrawal. It’s not being abused or misused. On the other hand, Vivitrol is responsible for overdose deaths, when patients end or attempt to end that method of treatment.

Methadone maintenance treatment is an important drug addiction treatment that succeeds at high rates but gets little credit for saving the lives of many people who use it. On top of helping to prevent diseases like HIV and HCV, it is responsible for improving the psychological health of patients who take it.

According to a study published in the New England Journal of Medicine at the start of the methadone treatment phase, several patients were found to have stopped engaging in criminal activity. In the book “The Effectiveness of Methadone Treatment,” authors John C. Ball and Alan Ross established that there was a 79% decrease in the number of criminal offenses committed by patients on methadone.

Methadone can improve the lives of everyone who needs it if they’re given the chance to take it. It helps to decrease the spread of disease and provides patients with the structure needed to get psychiatric help for other diseases. Methadone is a medical necessity and needs to be treated like it, without stigma attached to it from anyone.

Methadone will remain critical until we have a socialist society that can truly address the root societal causes of drug addiction and abuse and find a permanent cure. ☐

# The state of Mumia

**By Mumia Abu-Jamal**

*The following lightly edited commentary appeared on Prison Radio on May 12. On May 20, the Superior Court of Pennsylvania, claiming it has no jurisdiction over issues raised in Mumia’s open appeals, transferred all pending issues to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. This includes the request by Mumia’s attorneys to remand his case back to the Court of Common Pleas, to investigate new evidence found during the appeal process.*

I don’t usually do this. This is discussing myself. I find it far more interesting to tell the stories of others, the revolving globe on which we dwell and the stories spawned by the fragile human condition and the struggles of humanity for liberation.

But I digress, uncomfortably.

This commentary is about the commentator.

Several weeks ago I underwent a medical procedure known as open heart surgery, a double bypass, after it was learned that two vessels beating through my heart have significant blockages that impaired heart function.

This impairment was fixed by extremely well-trained and young cardiologists, who had extensive experience in this intricate surgical procedure.

I tell you I had no clue whatsoever that I suffered from such a disease. Now, to be perfectly honest, I feel fine.

Indeed, I feel more energetic than usual!

I thank you all, my family and friends, for your love and support.

Onwards to freedom with all my heart.

From imprisoned nation — Mumia Abu-Jamal. ☐

# *Support a Marxist voice for LGBTQ2S+ rights*

For over half a century, Workers World newspaper has covered the global struggle to end all forms of discrimination, persecution and violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and gender-nonconforming communities.

WW has consistently backed up our activist coverage with analysis. In the early 1970s, WW ran a series of articles that led to publication of “The Gay Question: A Marxist Appraisal” in 1976. Then in 1993, WW published “The Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression: A Marxist View,” with the first book’s original text and a new preface and afterword. (Read it at workers.org/books.)

In 2004 WW managing editor and globally recognized transgender leader Leslie Feinberg began the “Lavender & Red” series, which ran until 2008 in WW. A group of 25 articles from that series was later published as the book, “Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba.” In 2012 Feinberg performed civil disobedience and wrote articles defending Black trans woman CeCe McDonald, who was charged with manslaughter after defending herself from a racist, bigoted attack.

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

WW helps to build mass struggles, like what’s been going on in the streets from coast to coast. This righteous outpouring of rage and protest over the racist cop murder of George Floyd came as the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately impacted Black, Latinx and Indigenous peoples and immigrants.

Please help us get out the word. Join the Workers World Supporter Program. For a donation of at least $75 a year — or $100, or $300 or more if you can — receive a year’s subscription to WW; a regular letter about timely issues; and one, two or three subscriptions, respectively, to give to friends. Members can receive a copy of the book: “What Road to Socialism?” upon request. (Or read it at workers.org/books)

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We’re grateful for your help in building Workers World! ☐

Colombia

# Broad general strike challenges 'narc-oligarchy'

**By John Catalinotto**

May 23 — The general strike against anti-poor "reforms" in Colombia is finishing its fourth week. So far, every test of strength has shown popular support has grown in defiance of police and fascist murders and beatings of protesters and the threat of COVID-19, which has already killed 85,000 people.

**Thousands demonstrate in every Colombian city on May 19. Here, Bogotá.**

A May 19 national demonstration that brought out massive actions in all cities "exceeded all expectations," according to a May 20 article from Colombia in rebelion.org. The National Strike Committee has called for further mass protests May 25 and 26.

While the May 19 protests were basically peaceful, the Colombian state continues to rely on force and violence in its attempt to crush the strike movement. What is impressive is that the broad movement has continued to challenge that repressive state.

The big question is whether the strike movement can continue to grow and defy the militarized police, riot police (ESMAD) and the military itself. Will it challenge the rule of what Colombians call the narc-oligarchy and its U.S. imperialist backers? By narc-oligarchy, they mean the entanglement of narcotics capitalists — who have their own armed groups — with the rest of Colombia's superrich.

Challenging the state power seemed impossible before the strike began April 28. Economic shrinkage over the past year due to COVID-19 closing much of the economy, however, had already had its impact. It drove large sections of Colombia's 50 million people into poverty, including many members of the middle class.

Thus a much larger section of the population, including millions of youth who seem ready to risk all to confront the government, are shouting "Chao Duque." That is, they're saying goodbye and good riddance to rightist President Iván Duque. And they risk their lives daily to fight for this result.

### Strike threatens imperialist plunder

Such a challenge not only affects the Colombian superrich, it threatens U.S. imperialist interests in South America. Colombia's military is Washington's most powerful and useful tool for intervention on the continent. The U.S. has seven of its own military bases in Colombia. In addition, the Pentagon trains and arms the Colombian army, and Washington depends on this force to intervene directly against its neighbors.

In 2019 the Colombian army actively joined the U.S. attempt to destabilize and overthrow Venezuela's government, with the goal of replacing it with one led by U.S. puppet Juan Guaidó.

Since less than 5% of workers belong to unions in Colombia, for this general strike to succeed, broader forces must join the uprising. They have. Youths in the informal economy, neighborhood committees, farmers, Indigenous peoples, Afro-Colombians, even self-employed and small business people, all with their own usual organizations, have brought the struggle to a higher level.

What set off the strike were the Duque regime's four "reforms," which attacked the interests of workers and Colombia's poor people. The most blatant was the regressive 19% Value Added Tax — a sales tax — on purchases of goods and services. The reforms would drive millions more into poverty.

Before the May 19 national action, the strike already forced the government to cede — verbally — on two of the four unpopular reforms, those of tax and health. Some government ministers and the police chief of the city of Cali were forced out. These concessions seemed to encourage the strike movement, which demands the end of the other two reforms — pension and labor.

They demand that the police and army stop persecuting the demonstrators, set the arrested people free and account for anyone missing. More and more, the mass anger is turning against the very existence of the militarized state ruling Colombia's 50 million people. ☐

'1619 Project'

# Progressive educators oppose reactionary legislation

**By Andy Terhune**

Right-wing lawmakers in 15 states are passing legislation that will require public school teachers to teach a nationalist narrative of history, which ignores the genocidal, racist, sexist, anti-immigrant and oppressive history of the United States. Specific legislation differs among the 15 states, but they all include a shared goal of banning the application of "critical race theory" in social studies instruction.

This means teachers in Arizona, Arkansas, Idaho, Iowa, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Utah and West Virginia will be restricted from — and in some cases fined for — teaching about the role of racism in shaping the legal system and creating economic disparity and achievement gaps. And they won't be able to explain how inequities that still exist today are rooted in a white-supremacist past.

### Racists oppose 1619 Project

One of the curriculum resources that conservative lawmakers oppose is The 1619 Project. Its introduction states: "The 1619 Project is an ongoing initiative from The New York Times Magazine that began in August 2019, the 400th anniversary of the beginning of American slavery. It aims to reframe the country's history by placing the consequences of slavery and the contributions of Black Americans at the very center of our national narrative." (project1619.org)

Traditional education in the U.S. teaches students that the country's birth occurred in 1776. This narrative ignores its formation as a settler colony, based on stolen land and genocide of Indigenous peoples and the 157 years of chattel slavery that built the colonies before 1776. It ignores the role of the slave-trade and the character of settler-colonialism in political and economic independence from Britain. Republican lawmakers are trying to ban the 1619 project and multiple other critical teaching resources like it, in an attempt to prohibit an honest, authentic teaching of U.S. history.

Many of these lawmakers not only want to restrict discussions about critical race theory, but they are attempting to limit education about the role of sexism, heterosexism, xenophobia and class oppression throughout U.S. history. In Missouri, the proposed legislation would ban public school teachers from using any resources from the 1619 Project, Learning for Justice Curriculum of the Southern Poverty Law Center, Black Lives Matter at School, Teaching for Change and the Zinn Education Project.

If successful, teachers in these states would be forced to teach with whitewashed history textbooks that erase the struggles and contributions of oppressed peoples throughout this country's history. Idaho, Iowa, Oklahoma and Tennessee recently passed legislation that severely limits the ways teachers are allowed to discuss racism, sexism, homophobia, immigration, classism and other issues which right-wing legislators aim to suppress.

### Teaching the real history of the U.S.

Another collection of teaching resources that is at risk in these states is the Zinn Education Project, which was created with the belief that "through taking a more engaging and more honest look at the past, we can help equip students — and all of us — with the analytical tools to make sense of and improve the world today." Their website contains a vast amount of free downloadable lesson plans and articles, which "emphasize the role of working people, women, people of color and organized social movements in shaping history." (zinnedproject.org)

In response to the lawmakers working to ban their educational resources, the Zinn Education Project launched a pledge for educators to sign, saying that whether the reactionary legislation is passed or not, they refuse to lie to students and will continue to teach them the truth about U.S. history.

The pledge states: "We the undersigned educators will not be bullied. We will continue our commitment to develop critical thinking that supports students to better understand problems in our society and to develop collective solutions to those problems. We are for truth-telling and uplifting the power of organizing and solidarity that move us toward a more just society."

Also, the Zinn Education Project and Black Lives Matter at School are attempting to raise public awareness about the harm the proposed legislation will cause, by promoting countrywide gatherings hosted by Rethinking Schools and Teaching for Change.

These events will take place June 12 at locations that "symbolize or reflect history that teachers would be required to lie about or omit if these bills become law." Public awareness about this issue is currently slim, so those interested are encouraged to choose a significant location and organize a rally, together with community members and local unions.

Laws like those passed in Idaho, Iowa, Oklahoma and Tennessee require, either through commission or omission, students to be taught a reactionary view of history, full of falsehoods and backward ideas. Every student deserves a responsible education rooted in truth and respect for humanity.

Even the most gruesome, repulsive and controversial historical events can be analyzed by youth, if done with a responsible use of dialogue, reflection and communication. Educators, who are dedicated to teaching U.S. history in ways that are authentic about the roles all forms of bigotry and oppression have affected the country's development, are asking those who agree with them to show solidarity with teachers who are being denied the right to teach their students the truth.

*Pulitzer Prize-winner Nikole Hannah-Jones was recently denied tenure by the University of North Carolina Board of Trustees. Conservative board members voiced opposition to The 1619 Project, which she oversaw. It exposes the truth about the history of slavery in the U.S.*

# Asia-del-Sur: El afán de lucro impulsa el desalojo de los pobres

*Continúa de la página 12*

del COVID-19. Junto con la violencia estructural, incluido el apartheid de las vacunas, los habitantes de la India siguen enfrentándose a la amenaza de los desalojos forzados.

El año pasado, más de 20.000 personas fueron desalojadas entre el 16 de marzo y el 31 de julio, a pesar de las órdenes judiciales que prohibían los desalojos durante el cierre de COVID. Actualmente, en la India, 15 millones de personas se enfrentan a la posibilidad de ser desahuciadas.

Bajo el capitalismo, los trabajadores seguirán sufriendo porque este sistema no quiere ni puede proporcionar la infraestructura necesaria para garantizar el bienestar y la seguridad de todos los trabajadores. El capitalismo mata. Sus efectos son claramente evidentes en los actos abiertos de terror de la clase dominante contra los trabajadores.

El gobierno de Bahria Town que invade las comunidades de los pueblos indígenas pobres y les inflige violencia es un reflejo del gobierno nacional de Pakistán y de las fuerzas externas que etiquetan a los trabajadores como "invasores" y eliminan los asentamientos "ilegales".

Las campañas de desalojo forzoso que se llevan a cabo en la India dejan a las personas expuestas a un desalojo obligatorio prácticamente en cualquier momento. En cada situación, la clase dominante sólo quiere una cosa: beneficios. La pandemia y los desalojos forzados seguirán afectando principalmente a los trabajadores.

Debemos construir la solidaridad internacional y la resistencia contra los continuos ataques a nuestra clase. ☐

WORKERS WORLD
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From the River to the Sea
من النهر إلى البحر
PALESTINE WILL BE FREE
Workers Assembly Against Racism
FIGHT WHITE SUPREMACY
END U.S. AID FOR GENOCIDE IN PALESTINE!

MO FOTO: TONI ARENSTEIN

**Protesta contra el bombardeo israelí de Gaza, respaldado por Estados Unidos, el 12 de mayo en Times Square, Nueva York.**

## Workers World/Mundo Obrero exige

# ¡Alto al bombardeo de Gaza! ¡Liberar a Palestina! ¡Detener la ayuda de Estados Unidos a Israel!

**Por el editor**

Workers World Party/ Partido Mundo Obrero condena en los términos más enérgicos el asalto genocida del ejército sionista israelí contra el pueblo de Gaza—llamada la mayor prisión al aire libre del mundo y situada en la Palestina ocupada. Esta última batalla es una tragedia más en el continuo desplazamiento de los palestinos de su tierra por parte de los colonos sionistas.

Este ataque se produce durante el Eid Mubarak, que señala el final del Ramadán para millones de musulmanes de todo el mundo.

El WWP/PMO se suma a las organizaciones que celebran cientos de acciones mundiales en solidaridad con los gazatíes y el pueblo palestino en general, que llevan décadas luchando heroicamente por recuperar su patria robada. (Visita samidoun.net/events/ para encontrar una protesta cerca de ti).

Hasta el 14 de mayo, según el noticiero AlJazeera, los ataques aéreos israelíes habían matado a 122 palestinos, y el número de muertos sigue aumentando junto con los cerca de 1.000 heridos. Entre los muertos hay más de 30 niños.

Israel está aterrorizando a los residentes en edificios de apartamentos y casas día y noche, bajo el erróneo pretexto de "defenderse de los terroristas". El grupo de liberación palestino Hamás y sus aliados en Líbano han estado defendiendo Gaza lanzando cohetes contra Israel, que en realidad no son rivales para las Fuerzas de Defensa israelíes, armadas hasta los dientes por el gobierno de Estados Unidos.

Israel amenaza con enviar tropas de tierra a Gaza. AlJazeera también informó que siete manifestantes palestinos fueron asesinados en Cisjordania por las FDI.

### 73 años de resistencia

Fue el 15 de mayo de 1948 cuando los palestinos fueron desplazados violentamente de su patria ancestral mediante la creación de Israel por parte de los británicos y otros imperialistas occidentales, con el fin de controlar la región rica en petróleo conocida como Oriente Medio. El nombre de este desplazamiento es Nakba, la palabra árabe para desastre, que el pueblo palestino y sus partidarios han conmemorado durante los últimos 73 años.

Israel existe para proteger los intereses del imperialismo estadounidense — los lucrativos beneficios del petróleo — como un estado de guarnición militar que amenaza y ataca a los países ricos en petróleo de la región que se atreven a luchar por la soberanía sobre su tierra y sus recursos.

Mientras millones de personas en Estados Unidos han sufrido el desempleo, el hambre y la amenaza de desahucios durante la pandemia, Estados Unidos sigue apuntalando el régimen asesino israelí con $3.000 millones anuales en ayuda militar. Piensa en el alivio que esa sola cantidad podría suponer para el pueblo de Estados Unidos si no se utilizara para reprimir y ocupar a toda una nación...

Al igual que todos los presidentes que le precedieron desde 1948, demócratas y republicanos, el presidente Joe Biden declaró que "Israel tenía derecho a defenderse".

Como Susie Abulhawa, escritora y activista palestina, dijo a WW: "Lo que le ha ocurrido a Gaza en los últimos cuatro días sólo es noticia porque Gaza se está defendiendo de los ataques israelíes respaldados por Estados Unidos. No hay un signo de igualdad entre defenderse con el lanzamiento de cohetes desde el suelo frente a los potentes ataques aéreos. No hay un solo día en el que no se ejerza algún tipo de violencia sobre la población de Gaza o de cualquier otra parte de la Palestina ocupada que no sea informado por las fuentes principales".

Exigimos: Detener el bombardeo de Gaza. ¡Detener la ayuda de Estados Unidos a Israel! ¡Liberen a Palestina! ☐

## Asia-del-Sur El afán de lucro impulsa el desalojo de los pobres

**Por Tania Siddiqi**

En Pakistán, Karachi Bachao Tehreek (KBT), una alianza de activistas locales que luchan contra los desalojos y las apropiaciones ilegales de tierras, denunció que el personal de Bahria Town, los guardias privados de la ciudad y la policía de la provincia de Sindh entraron el 7 de mayo en varios Goths [pequeños barrios poblados principalmente por personas de etnia sindhi] con maquinaria pesada, con la intención de seguir invadiendo las tierras de los indígenas pobres.

Abdul Hafeez, miembro de la Alianza por los Derechos de los Indígenas de Sindh, informó al periódico "Dawn" de que los guardias y la policía intentaron destruir los cultivos con bulldozers en Kamal Khan Jokhio Goth. Los miembros de la comunidad respondieron con actos de resistencia contra los intrusos. Después de que una persona arrojara una piedra al personal de Bahria Town, los guardias empezaron a disparar a los aldeanos.

El activista indígena Shaukat Khaskheli recibió un disparo, pero las fuerzas del orden lo llevaron a una comisaría en lugar de a un hospital. Otros aldeanos fueron secuestrados y torturados por los guardias de Bahria Town por sus actos de resistencia y su negativa a permitir que Bahria Town les robara sus tierras. (Dawn, 9 de mayo)

El último ataque bárbaro de Bahria Town es paralelo a los horribles esfuerzos capitalistas que tienen lugar en otros lugares de Pakistán.

La guerra en curso de la clase dominante pakistaní contra los trabajadores pobres se centra en la promoción de la comerciabilidad y la modernización de las empresas. Uno de sus ataques más flagrantes contra la clase trabajadora fue su campaña de 2019 para desalojar a los llamados "invasores" que ocupaban estructuras "ilegales". En la época en que se puso en marcha el programa contra las invasiones, entre el 30% y el 40% de la economía de Karachi consistía en mercados informales que abastecían a los viajeros y a los turistas, y que proporcionaban el sustento a unos dos millones de personas.

Sin embargo, eso no impidió que los funcionarios del gobierno demolieran los negocios y las casas de la gente. En Empress Market, uno de los mercados más conocidos de Karachi, se destruyeron al menos 1700 tiendas y puestos durante la campaña contra la invasión.

Un informe de marzo de 2019 exponía la siguiente información: "Hasta ahora se han demolido 3.575 tiendas, lo que afecta directamente a no menos de 17.500 trabajadores, si suponemos un promedio de cinco personas vinculadas a cada tienda. El número de afectados se dispara a 140.000 si suponemos que cada trabajador tiene siete personas a su cargo." (Amanecer, 12 de marzo de 2019)

El ensañamiento contra los trabajadores continúa, incluso durante una pandemia mundial.

En febrero, la Corporación Metropolitana de Karachi (KMC), la entidad que supervisa las campañas contra la usurpación de terrenos, anunció su intención de iniciar una nueva campaña cerca de Orangi Nala y Gujjar Nala, pequeños arroyos efímeros de Karachi. La KMC alegó que el desalojo de unas 14.000 viviendas y 3.000 locales comerciales era necesario para ampliar los desagües, de modo que pudieran mejorar el "buen flujo del agua de lluvia", especialmente durante las inundaciones. (Samaa TV, 25 de febrero)

FOTO: KARACHI BACHAO TEHREEK

**Residentes de Karachi luchan contra los desalojos y las demoliciones ilegales.**

Sin embargo, había motivos más insidiosos para expulsar a los trabajadores de sus medios de vida y sus hogares.

La abogada popular Abira Ashfaq reveló que los desalojos forzosos se llevan a cabo para transferir los derechos de gestión de la tierra "a las empresas de construcción y al Banco Mundial para que [puedan] beneficiarse de ello". (The News International, 22 de marzo) La asesora de investigación de KBT, Fizza Qureshi, descubrió que los datos que la KMC utilizaba para justificar su afán de robar a la clase trabajadora eran defectuosos.

En referencia al Gujjar Nala, "las recientes inundaciones urbanas de Karachi no fueron causadas por el Gujjar Nullah [desagüe], sino por las comunidades cerradas y las grandes plazas que se habían construido en los deltas de los ríos y que atendían exclusivamente a la élite".

### Desalojos forzados en la India

Al otro lado de la frontera, en la India, los habitantes siguen sufriendo inmensos traumas y violencia causados por los mecanismos legales y extralegales utilizados para sacar provecho de la pandemia

*Continúa en la página 11*

## El Estatus de Mumia

**por Mumia Abu-Jamal**

Por lo regular, no hago esto, es decir, no escribo sobre mí mismo. Encuentro mucho más interesante contar las historias de otras personas, del globo giratorio en que vivimos, historias generadas por la frágil condición humana y las luchas de liberación de la humanidad.

Pero me desvío del tema, incómodamente.

Éste es un comentario sobre el comentador.

Hace varias semanas me sometí a un procedimiento médico conocido como la cirugía a corazón abierto, un doble bypass después de que se supo que existían obstrucciones en dos vasos sanguíneos latiendo hacia mi corazón que perjudicaron la función cardíaca.

Esta deficiencia fue reparada por algunos jóvenes cardiólogos bien preparados y con amplia experiencia en este complejo procedimiento quirúrgico.

Les digo que yo no tenía la menor idea de qué sufría de tal enfermedad. Pero ahora, para ser perfectamente honesto, me siento muy bien. De hecho, me siento con más energía de lo normal.

Les agradezco a todxs ustedes — a mi familia, a mis amigas y amigos — su amor y apoyo.

¡Vamos adelante hacia la libertad, de todo corazón!

Desde la nación encarcelada, soy Mumia Abu-Jamal. *12 de mayo de 2021* ☐